

Ruminations in Quarantine

by Anonymous

4.15.20 7:17 pm

Spent most of the day driving around the hill country and hanging out in Blanco with my parents and Sturgill, my dog. It is probably the most beautiful and green I have ever seen the hill country, but the bluebonnets have come and went by now for some reason, leaving just the yellow flowers on the sides of the roads. I technically had class today, but given that I didn't have to zoom any of my teachers I was able to do my work on a very laid-back time-scale. Definitely one of the beauties of online school, which are few and far between. I still wish I could be in school passing classmates and being able to socialize. I miss the Mac community. I also wish I could still be a part of the track team. I miss practice after school and the meets on Saturdays. I had so much going for me and then it was all taken away. It's hard not to look at it that way.

4.16.20 3:25 pm

Just went into central market for the first time since masks became mandatory in Travis County. It was very interesting. I had to wait in line with my mom all the way around the store but it only took about 10 minutes to actually get into the store. Everyone wore a mask.... and to my strong disliking my mom and I also wore bandanas for the first time. I felt like a sheep. Everyone was weird, too. One time I turned onto an aisle and someone looked at me, fear in their eyes, turned around and left. It just seems like insanity to me. One of my favorite things to do is go to the grocery store, but now that's been subdued. I think the attitude of other people and places rub off on me more than I think, and being stared at with a look of fear makes me question my own priorities and emotions during this pandemic, despite also distracting me from what kind of food I want to get. My parents and I also ate out for the first time in a couple weeks, going through the drive-through at Tacorrido. But I've also started to enjoy making my lunches at home. My school schedule is also very hard to follow. I have work due, but no one to make me do it, and on top of that, very loose deadlines. It is extremely hard not to procrastinate.

9:34 pm

I am thinking about going back to school, walking in the halls, past my peers, my friends, smelling the school smell, what I'd do during lunch, seeing my teachers, the hall monitors, the police officers, making ceramics, and waking up early, and it's so bizarre. It's like the feeling you get during summer, but I never got closure for the end of the year. I also wasn't ready for the year to end like I usually am by mid-May. And I can't hangout with my friends or do normal summer activities because everything is shut down. 'Unprecedented' is the perfect word, but it also isn't enough to capture what's going on mentally for me: a laziness, helplessness, and lack of inspiration. I don't have any motivation to take care of the things I need to do. And I know everyone else must be feeling it too.

4.18.20 10:05 pm

I am exhausted. Today my dad and I drove to Alpine, TX where I've kinda been living and splitting my time between Austin. It is a long ass drive. Everything is closed out here, as expected, but not even restaurants are open for take out like they are in Austin because they don't have as much foot traffic as cities. It is weird being in a small town, too, because there's no traffic at all. None. It is like a ghost town. It is tough living out here right now. But it's beautiful too. The nights are in the low 50s and the days are clear, not a cloud in the sky. The high desert air is dry and the wind whips your face red and cracked. We plan on climbing Guadalupe Peak tomorrow, which should be super strange because I can almost guarantee there's going to be no one in the park. But I'm excited. The sky is super big out here and you can see extremely far. It makes you realize how small you are, how insignificant you and what your body can do is compared to the world around you. It makes me think about the virus and how really, we have no control over what happens. Nature will always overpower us; is always above us. I have always believed we cannot pit ourselves against nature and that we have to become one with it, to live with it, instead of fight it. But how do you do that when there is a virus sweeping through the Earth's population?

Really I am excited to just immerse myself into nature and ease my mind, and test the physical capabilities of my body. Deep down.... I just want to go home. Want to go back to school. Want to walk the halls of McCallum. Not have to deal with online school bullshit. I just want to hang out with friends and my community at Mac and look them in the eyes in real life, not through a computer. But I am trying to make the most of the situation and keep my mind positive. But when I'm tired like this, I am also tired of holding back the negative thoughts.

PS: We got up the next morning and found out the park was closed. They announced it the evening of Friday 4/17 on the website. We had checked Friday morning to make sure we were good to go and then we didn't bother to check again as we left super early Saturday morning. We biked Pinto Canyon road instead.

4.22.20 11:24 am

We came back to Austin yesterday. It was pretty out in West Texas. I want to go back out there. But there is nothing for me to do. Bike the roads, but it's really windy. Hang out in my brother's apartment but it's uncomfortable and no outside space for me to hang out in. Nothing is open, the grocery store out there doesn't have foods that I like to cook with. Kitchen is small, cooking isn't super comfortable. But a part of me wants to conquer it out there. I don't even know what that means or why I don't want to be in Austin. But sitting in my room and walking around my house has me thinking about school and track and all the stuff I used to be involved in. And it's better weather out there too, and living independently seems like a fun idea right now. At least for a week. But I went out there before and tried it and came back after 4 days because I was bored. But now I know what to expect and I'll have the bike. I also know the towns a little better. I don't know. My mind is scattered. I wish the parks were open because then I could climb

mountains. And I don't understand why they can't have them open like they did before with a limited amount of park rangers. It is totally possible to socially distance in the parks, too, way more possible than when I go to the grocery store in Austin or the fact that the closed parks force me to hang out in town instead of getting out in nature. Climbing a mountain is the ultimate form of isolation. So that's really frustrating. But I also understand why they're closed because they ultimately have to pay the park rangers that are out there, however few are working, which just isn't sustainable. So I understand, but I just want to climb a mountain.